

ASIAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES TRIPOS PART 1B

Middle Eastern Studies

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Monday 6 June 2011      09.00 – 12.00

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**MES.17 THE FORMATION OF ISLAM**

*Answer **three** questions. All questions carry equal marks.*

*Answer each question in a separate answer booklet.*

*Write your number **not** your name on the cover sheet of **each** answer booklet that you use.*

**STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS**

*20 Page Answer Book x 1*

*Rough Work Pad*

You may not start to read the questions printed on the subsequent pages of this question paper until instructed that you may do so by the Invigilator

Answer **three** questions.

- 1 To what extent should the establishment of Islam and its spread in the Middle East and North Africa be regarded as a break from the past?
- 2 Describe and explain how and why people converted to Islam between the foundation of the *amsar* and the rise of the Buyids in the tenth century CE.
- 3 Why was early Islamic history marked by so many civil wars (*fitnah*)? At what point, if any, were the tensions they revealed resolved?
- 4 Should the Umayyad state be described as an 'Arab kingdom' (Wellhausen)?
- 5 **Either** (a) How and why did Prophetic *hadith* become significant for Islamic law?  
**Or** (b) Examine the historical development of Islamic mysticism (Sufism) and attitudes towards it on the part of the orthodox religious establishment.
- 6 To what extent was Shi'ism important in the Buyids' rule in western Iran and what other sources of legitimacy did they draw upon?
- 7 Compare and contrast the attitudes of the peoples of the Islamic west (Iberia and North Africa) to the caliphate with those of their eastern counterparts.
- 8 How did women influence the development of classical Islamic thought and institutions?

**END OF PAPER**